attend school, but none has yet sought any other career than that of the housewife. For the youths, failure in school is a personal and domestic tragedy of great moment, because it precludes a career in the government or the army, and they are often severely castigated by their disappointed fathers. At the same time, politics, the primary conversational topic of the townsmen, becomes an extravagant interest of the young men, and such matters are discussed endlessly. Homosexuality, or, at least, a very intimate masculine friendship, can be a temporary feature of this period, usually ended by marriage. It must be confessed that many of the young men of the town spend much of their time unemployed, lounging in the chaykhanas or tea-shops where, through enlisted personnel of the army or certain vagrants, they can be exposed to influence of this type.[1] A person listened to an elder brother berating one of his juniors for spending too much time in the tea-shops, a situation of some concern to the family. Adolescence can thus be a time of great stress for many of the youths of the town, and distraught young men form a type frequently encountered.

872 883 565 861 872 521 883 838 883 861 883

[1]One was consulted by many of the townspeople for medicine or advice. One youth of the lower classes complained of "weakness," and sought some sort of remedy. On being questioned, he confessed that se coitum cum caprio per anum faciens, but this, prohibited by both religious and civil law, appeared to be a rare and isolated example. It does, however, illustrate the extremes which stringency in premarital sexual relations can create.

4: Hansen E-S (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

when, at the age of 6-7, it has learnt in the Koran school the verses of the holy book and is able to take part in the daily religious exercises[48]. On the other hand the home, as I saw it in Southern Kurdistan, had a larger place for the child as a member of the community than is the case with us. Childhood was not a period separated from the adult age, but a preparation for it[49].

Just as the mother or one of the other women in the house found it natural to have the infant in her arms as soon as it was awake during the day, so she found it quite in order to have what we should call the "kindergarten child" at her heels all over the place, in many cases participating in the various daily tasks.

The "child at play" was an unknown phenomenon, and toys were practically non-existent. Compared with our Western education after the introduction of what is sometimes euphonistically called "the century of the child", it seems to me that we often buy our children out of the adult community, stressing the importance of the child's undisturbed playing age by toys, nurseries and so forth. Kurdish society was so arranged as also to include the child. At the various ages the child entered its definite place in the family hierachy. It grew up well-trained in its coming duties, with an assured feeling of its position and what was expected of it. Without any sudden transition it glided into the ranks of the adults.

Both in the case of guests and members of the family, including children, a very polite social convention prevailed, though this did not prevent excitable or noisy conduct. The ideal was a calm and dignified behaviour, and this also meant that one always took one's time. This made social intercourse extremely pleasant and apparently had a calming effect on the children. It may well be that the thoroughly cultivated manner was merely an outer form, but it helped to create a pleasant atmosphere in the homes. All conversation took place in a calm and worthy way with numerous pauses. As Ostrup has already pointed out, the Oriental does not, like the European, regard it as good form to chat all the time[50]. The presence of the children was noticed remarkably little, even when there were many, because life in the house and their participation in the daily round provided a natural outlet for their energies. Many of the functions in the house which with us are performed by the water supply, gas, technical aids etc. necessitated with the Kurds human assistance which did not exhaust the powers of children. Many of the amenities we consider a matter of course were replaced by the efforts of the young, just as the adults' mode of life and whole pattern of behaviour, the outward symptom of which is dignity, required the service that the children were able to provide. In individual cases this could result in misuse. I discovered that one lazy step-mother grossly misused and over-worked a 12 year old step-daughter. However, this was more due to ignorance as to what a child's strength could stand and how much sleep a growing child required than to ill-will. Life in Southern Kurdistan was hard for the adults also, child mortality dreadfully high. As in all communities at a medieval stage, only the best equipped survived. Medical assistance was rare, hygiene limited. The physical world in Southern Kurdistan was hard, but on the other hand the psychic climate was more clement than our's. Children were seldom treated angrily and I only experienced the hint of punishment. The children's participation in the activities of adults was apparently consonant with their natural impulses, and the company of grown-ups provided the children with so much entertainment and so many tasks that they prided themselves on performing, that conflict situations were confined to a minimum, and were not expressed in aggressions with subsequent punishment and the

4: Hassen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

● 86 [513] stressing that the child was outside adult society. Children were obedient, unobtrusive, polite and industrious. They were never put to bed in the evening (apart from infants), but fell asleep where and when it suited them. If they had been taken by the women on a visit, they fell asleep in the course of the evening, and when the mother left the child was put on her shoulders, hip or arm and carried home. The children of the house fell to the floor when tired, and were covered with whatever happened to be nearest at hand, often a prayer rug of goat's wool. Later, when the adults arranged their own quarters for the night, the children were carried to the mattress on which they were to spend the night. Everybody rose very early, the children when they awoke. Undressing at night was just as unknown to the children as to the adults, and the same applied in regard to the evening or morning wash. [515] During the day the children were caught, given clean clothes, if necessary, and washed. When there was plenty of warm water in the house their hair was washed.

[864] As the children always stayed among the adults they obtained all the sexual instruction they could understand, and became aware of all phases of life. In regard to conditions with Egyptian Arabs about 100 years ago, Lane[1] says that however much children were caressed and fondled, they feel the deepest and most admirable respect for their parents. He adds that disobedience shown to parents is regarded by Muslims as one of the major sins. To round off the picture of the child's life among Kurds, which in the main agrees with Lane's account of conditions in Egypt, a few examples must be cited of children I met who suffered from difficulties of adjustment. This may serve to throw into relief what I have attempted to describe above as the reason why a child with the Kurds had in general a quiet adolescence devoid of psychic strain. Within the village aristocracy, Sheikh Taifur's youngest, 6 year old, son was cruel to the small birds he carried round in his pockets; he teased the kids and tried to maltreat his donkey. When able to do so he also stole butter from the household store. His father treated him surprisingly gently and affectionately which momentarily restored his balance. But this child, the youngest male offspring, the mother tried to keep at the baby stage, whilst he in vain attempted to compete with his 13 and 18 year old brothers. He appeared to be quite an exception, created by various unfortunate contributary circumstances. That the children of the village tenant farmers attacked one, tried to run off with camera accessories, and showed in the beginning no spontaneous friendliness, must be attributed to the residual xenophobia also evinced by their elders when the European engineers arrived some years earlier to plan the building of the Dokan dam. It was said that from the village of Topzawa, where I came to live and from which workers were later obtained for the construction work, the Europeans had been fired upon. The same hostile attitude retained by the children I met with in the mountains near an isolated farm, where some little girls cast stones at me and some boys on the way home with sacks of grass on their backs, threatened me and struck at me with their sickles before I was permitted to pass along the narrow mountain path. In the urban milieu I met a case where a subordinate Kurdish official's wife on an excursion with his superior's wife, married to the Arab mutesarrif in Sulaimani, fearful that her boys had not behaved correctly to the children of the mutesarrif, began hysterically to hit her children who were quite innocent of the alleged offence. It was said that this same woman, who appeared to be very subdominant, got her children locked in at home for social reasons.

[158] My interpreter and I had her 13 year old half-brother living with her at Topzawa, and later

4: Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

accompanying us on our trips, without there being the slightest suspicion of difficulty with him. We literally scarcely realised his existence so well did he fit into the various situations. In the over-populated home at Sulaimani, however, I once saw my interpreter's mother, the elder of the two wives, run through the room with a glowing twig from the fire to hit him with it for some reason or other. My impression was that the woman unjustifiably had demanded some service or other from the lad, which he had refused, and that it was she who was in the wrong.

In another urban milieu, an absolutely uneducated one insofar as the woman was concerned, I once came across what we should term a difficult and malicious *girl of 6–7 years of age*. She was the elder of two girls, two others having died, and the mother was clearly unbalanced because the husband, pressed by neighbours and possibly also by personal proclivities, had several times been about to obtain another wife who would bear him the son refused to the present wife. The child was a visible manifestation of the mother's conflict situation, and can, in my opinion, only be considered an exception among the Kurdish children I had an opportunity of observing.

By reviewing the activities of the children in and outside the home in the four different female environments I learned to know in Southern Kurdistan, an attempt will be made to give an impression of their adolescence and upbringing.

Small girls of the village aristocracy took part in women's house work according to their age and ability. They assisted in rolling out the dough for baking from the age of three. They kept the sheep still when being milked in the courtyard, and kept the flies away when their elders were at meals. They helped to pick the vegetables in the field. They assisted adult men and women in the washing of hands, which took place in a squatting position whilst water from a jug was poured over the hands. They filled the samowar with charcoal and took part in washing-up. Last, but not least, they participated in the serving of tea, as it was the children, or, if none was present, the humblest in the company, who fetched the tea glasses from the samowar and returned with them when they were empty (cf. p. 48). This was done with seriousness and decorum, and with no little pride at having reached the stage where that was entrusted to them. They attended to the small brothers and sisters, helped them to eat, and had small ones on their backs when they left the house. School attendance was not part of their life pattern. A *mulla*, however, told me that he had a daughter attending the village boy's school where he taught (Balkha), but that was an exception[1].

Small girls of the village aristocracy were, when grown up, fully trained in the skills expected of them. They were well-acquainted with house work, the care of children, and with decorous behaviour.

In Sheikh Taiba's house at Topzawa most of the house work was done by a 17 year old daughter, who also stood in attendance if, for example, her mother wanted to take a bath in the *hammām*. It was said that until one of the sons—the eldest of whom was only 13—came home with a daughter-in-law, the mother did not wish to give away in marriage the indispensible working power represented by her daughter.

The boys within the village aristocracy were sent to school. As they reached a suitable age, the sons of the sheikh at Topzawa were sent to relatives' homes at Kirkuk or Sulaimani in order to attend school[2]. During these years they glided out of the village milieu, only returning to it during their